

1. Introduction



Historic photo of life on the Reservation.

The Flathead Indian Reservation was established by the terms of the Hellgate Treaty entered into by the United States and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on July 16, 1855. U.S. Highway 93 traverses the Flathead Indian Reservation between its north and south boundaries for a distance of approximately 80 miles. The Montana Department of Transportation has proposed a reconstruction project for a 56-mile segment of the highway. In support of that proposed project, the U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department of Transportation, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes jointly endeavor to develop guidelines for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of U.S. Highway 93 which recognize and protect the Flathead Indian Reservation as the permanent homeland of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille people. This endeavor will require a unified approach to design, detailing, maintenance, and interpretation. The following guidelines are the initial results of this endeavor.

The Design Guidelines and Recommendations define a collective vision of how the US 93 corridor from Evaro to Polson, Montana will be experienced by both locals and visitors.

2. Fundamental Design Considerations

The guiding philosophy for modification of U.S. Highway 93 is to protect cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and natural resources located along the highway corridor and to communicate the respect and value that is commonly held for these resources pursuant to traditional ways of the Tribes. The following objectives will be emphasized:

- Safely accommodate the present and future transportation needs of the citizens of Montana.
- Limit highway-related growth and development outside of established communities.
- Avoid construction in areas of traditional cultural and spiritual significance.



Aerial photo of the potholes in the Ninepipe Wildlife Refuge.